

Hon Eugenie Sage

Minister of Conservation

Minister for Land Information

Associate Minister for the Environment

Minita mō Te Papa Atawhai

Minita mō Toitū Te Whenua

Minita Tuarua mō Te Taiao



Mr T. Benseman

Via: fyi-request-11871-a78e8cce@requests.fyi.org.nz

26 May 2020

Dear Mr Benseman

Thank you for your email of 12 December 2019, to the Prime Minister. The following parts of your email have been referred to me for response in my capacity as Associate Minister for the Environment:

- 1) *Has there been any thoughts or actions by you into reducing the two major pollutants - petrochemical urea and sodium fluoroacetate, which has the rather disgusting habit of littering our rivers with dead rotting animals and is also very cruel, taking up to 120 hours to kill pigs, during which time they vomit 13.6 times on average before death. Native Kea, thankfully, only take 30 hours to die from the same substance.*
- 2) *And regarding "piloting alternatives to 1080" which you also signed up to in the agreement, what have you actually done with this?*

Your request has been treated as a request for information under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

I have interpreted 'petrochemical urea' to mean urea fertiliser. As a substance with corrosive, ecotoxic, and explosive properties, it is subject to the standard controls (rules) set on such substances by the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) to protect human health and the environment. In terms of actions to reduce the use of urea fertiliser, I am refusing your request under Section 18(e) of the Act, that the information requested does not exist. I suggest that you contact the Ministry of Primary Industries (MPI), as they may have information about the use of urea in New Zealand. MPI can be contacted at info@mpi.govt.nz.

I note your comments about animal carcasses polluting waterways. The EPA is responsible for setting controls over the use of 1080 and monitoring the results of 1080 operations. The controls on the use of 1080 require operators to report on incidents which involve 1080.

The EPA has informed me that they are not aware of any incidents of rivers being contaminated with animal carcasses following 1080 operations. You may want to contact your regional council for information about water contamination.

The amount of 1080 used to treat forests in aerial operations has been steadily declining, and New Zealand is now using around 30 times less per hectare compared to fifty years ago. The EPA also keeps abreast of a large and growing body of research into developing alternatives to 1080 and into using 1080 more efficiently.

Some of the research into developing alternatives to 1080 and into using 1080 more efficiently has involved trials and pilot studies. You can find out more about these in the EPA's annual reports on aerial 1080 operations, at <https://www.epa.govt.nz/resources-and-publications/monitoring-and-reporting/?tag=322> (click on the 'All categories' menu, and select 'EPA Annual report on aerial 1080 operations'). You may also be interested to know that the 2018 Annual Report includes a summary of research undertaken in 2018, and a summary of all relevant research undertaken since 2007. This report can be found on the EPA's website at [EPA-annual-report-on-aerial-1080-operations-2018](#).

I trust that this publicly available information addresses part two of your query (on piloting alternatives to 1080); as such I am refusing your request under Section 18(d) of the Act, that it is publicly available.

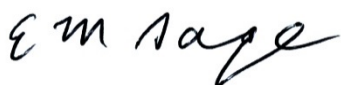
I acknowledge your concerns about the importance of minimising the suffering of animals when pest control measures are used. Research has shown that 1080 is more humane than first generation anticoagulants, which are considered to be slow and painful killers, and vertebrate toxic agents (VTAs) can cause significantly more suffering.

Many of the controls on the use of 1080 are aimed at limiting by-kill of non-target species such as pigs and kea. Serious cases of by-kill such as those that occurred with native birds in the 1970s are now rare. You can find out more about the positive impact of 1080 on kea populations on the Department of Conservation's website at: <https://www.doc.govt.nz/our-work/tiakina-nga-manu/tiakina-nga-manu-monitoring-results/kea/>.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review of this decision by the Ombudsman. You can contact the Ombudsman on 0800 802 602, or by email at info@ombudsman.parliament.nz.

I hope that this addresses your concerns. If you have any further queries about hazardous substances, please do not hesitate to contact the EPA via ministerials@epa.govt.nz.

Yours sincerely



Hon Eugenie Sage
Associate Minister for the Environment